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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Economic and Community Development Agency (ECDA) Awarded New R3 Program Grant from Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)

KANKAKEE, Ill. (January 22, 2021) – The City of Kankakee's Economic and Community Development Agency (ECDA) is one of the grant recipients for the new Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) Program through the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA).

ICJIA has announced 80 grants that total \$31.5 million to organizations which help communities hardest hit by the failed war on drugs through the R3 Program. The program was created as a key equity element of the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act according to the ICJIA's press release. The law requires that 25 percent of all cannabis revenue be used to support communities impacted by:

- social disinvestment
- violence
- severe and disproportionate damage caused by the war on drugs
- largely and disproportionately impacted low income Illinoisans and communities of color

The ECDA was awarded \$28,723 for an "Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing" report that is needed every five years under the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) standards. The ECDA has determined it is best to hire a professional planner to assist the department in creating a detailed professional analysis which will provide data and community input to resolutely identify impediments in meeting fair housing goals, as well as eliminate barriers based on race, ethnicity, income, age, disability and restorative justice.

“When Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton appointed me to this board, I wanted to make sure the voice of Kankakee and the challenges of our community were considered as revenues from the expansion of adult-use cannabis are distributed to communities throughout our state. Our city team is committed to moving Kankakee Forward in a way that embraces equity and is intentional as we address the factors that contribute to violence in our neighborhoods. I will continue to serve as a strong advocate for our residents and appreciate the work of the entire R3 Board to provide these much needed resources; particularly to areas of the community where disinvestment has been a matter of policy and practice,” said Mayor Wells-Armstrong.

A professional housing report will allow the City of Kankakee to develop short- and long- term plans to address housing needs, express those plans to potential developers, and acutely inform Kankakee of its greatest fair housing impediments. Results of the report will be public information for everyone to use to benefit Kankakee residents.

“A home is much more than four walls or shelter. The pandemic has really brought to light how our homes have become our office, playground, school, theater, resting place, and much more,” states ECDA Director, Barbi Brewer-Watson. “Everyone should have access to housing choices that fit their needs and not be denied those choices due to any form of discrimination. This study will examine our local laws, ordinances, statutes, and policies as well as our local conditions and how those conditions affect location, accessibility, and availability.”

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About the Economic and Community Development Agency (ECDA):

The Kankakee Economic and Community Development (ECDA) is a local government agency whose mission is to improve the lives of Kankakee residents and enhance the economic vitality of communities through housing, economic development and community development. The ECDA administers programs that serve the neighborhoods and residents of the City of Kankakee provided by federal, state and local funding. For more information, contact ECDA at 815-933-0506, Monday – Friday between 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Visit our website at <https://ecda.citykankakee-il.gov/>.

About the City of Kankakee, Illinois:

The City of Kankakee is dedicated to protecting, building and nurturing the community while enhancing lives. We are a historic, vibrant and active riverfront community. We continue to transform into an extraordinary place to dream, grow and thrive. Embracing our diversity, we strive to be progressive, inclusive and innovative. For more information on the City of Kankakee, please visit the website at www.citykankakee-il.gov.